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22 October 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR : Deputy Director (Science and Technology)

SUBJECT : Procurement of C Triple Prime Camera Systems for  
Project IDEALIST

1. The prototype C Triple Prime camera installed in U-2 No. 342, now at Barksdale, gives us a swath width of some 17.3 nautical miles. It does not, however, offer stereo convergence, which is considered by the photo interpreter to be an invaluable tool in maximizing the yield from the photography. This single prototype installation remains a "Flying Breadboard" in the sense that we do not at the moment have spare parts back-up and support equipment to sustain an operational camera program. It can, however, be used with moderation, although its installation in an aircraft other than No. 342 does require a certain amount of rewiring, bracket installation, etc., taking several days and costing in the neighborhood of [redacted] per change-over to another aircraft.

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2. Our intention all along has been that once the resolution limits of the C Triple Prime camera were established through flight tests and operation, we would move toward a dual camera configuration which we hoped would provide convergent stereo in a much broader swath width. Up until late this week we had hoped to be able to nearly double the 17.3NM figure. It turns out, however, that this is not as simple as we had hoped, and that one of the principal limitations in achieving our goal is the size of the equipment bay on the aircraft, which does not permit tilting of the camera in such a manner as to achieve the optimum we had anticipated.

3. In view of the demonstrated operational performance of the C Triple Prime camera, we have come up with the following course of action:

a. We are procuring a total of four dual C Triple Prime camera systems furnishing 17.3NM swath width with 30 degrees convergent stereo, 70 degrees lateral coverage, two to one contrast, target specifications calling for better than 10 inches ground resolution with 3,000 plus NM linear coverage.

NRO review(s) completed.

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The delivery of the first system is targeted for four months after an equipment bay mock up meeting with Lockheed which we will press for within the next week.

b. The cost of this proposal is [redacted] as a budget figure. Fiscal year 1964 funds are available for this purpose. Contract negotiation may well be able to come below this target, since we will argue that having paid for the basic R&D on the camera under the CORONA Program, we should achieve a price break not only on this item, but on the ground support equipment involved. The first camera system will call for [redacted] the

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[redacted] This includes two sets of OME, which when combined with four camera systems should enable us to deploy an operational capability to two theaters of operation at once. This, of course, is the basic premise of our staging concept.

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c. If we simply wanted carbon copies of the prototype system now in Article 342, these could be procured [redacted] each with delivery in three months. We are not recommending this move in view of the absence of a convergent stereo capability.

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4. In reaching the conclusion to initiate procurement of the operationally tried and tested C Triple Prime camera, consideration was given to existing and downstream possible competitive systems noted in attachment. The Hycon 48 inch camera system holds promise as an eventual system for both the U-2 and OXCART programs, but the camera is three months away from the commencement of flight tests. Mindful of the requirement to improve camera ground resolution capabilities in the U-2 and since time is of the essence, we feel that the procurement of the convergent stereo version of the operationally demonstrated C Triple Prime camera is warranted at this time.

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[redacted]  
Acting Assistant Director  
(Special Activities)

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